

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. In a computer network comprising a client computer and a plurality of servers,  
2 wherein each server is capable of being assigned at least one conversion rating, each  
3 conversion rating corresponding to a first file format unreadable by the client computer  
4 that the respective server is capable of converting into a second file format readable by  
5 the client computer, a method for selecting one of the plurality of servers comprising:  
6 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the file is written in a source  
7 format unreadable by the client computer; and  
8 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest conversion rating  
9 assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the received file.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising: selecting a conversion format for the  
2 received file, wherein the conversion format is readable by the client computer, and  
3 further wherein the selected server is capable of converting the received file written in the  
4 source format into the received file written in the conversion format.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising: reading a Multipurpose Internet Mail  
2 Extension (MIME) attached to the received file to identify the source format of the  
3 received file.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of selecting one of the plurality of  
2 servers further comprises:  
3 broadcasting the source format of the received file to the plurality of servers;  
4 in response to the broadcast, receiving from at least one of the plurality of servers  
5 the conversion rating assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the received  
6 file; and  
7 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest received conversion  
8 rating.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the client computer comprises a lookup table  
2 having one or more entries, each entry including a file format unreadable by the client  
3 computer and a preferred one of the plurality of servers capable of converting the  
4 unreadable file format into a file format readable by the client computer, and wherein the  
5 step of selecting one of the plurality of servers further comprises:  
6 locating the entry in the lookup table corresponding to the source format of the  
7 received file; and  
8 selecting the server included in the located entry of the lookup table.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the client computer and the selected server utilize  
2 different operating systems.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 transmitting to the selected server the received file written in the source format  
3 unreadable by the client computer;  
4 receiving from the selected server the received file written in a conversion format  
5 readable by the client computer, wherein the received file written in the source format is  
6 converted by the selected server into the received file written in the conversion format;  
7 and  
8 displaying the received file written in the conversion format on the client  
9 computer using a native application on the client computer.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the conversion format for the received file is  
2 Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) format, and the native application on the client  
3 computer is a web browser application.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein the source format of the received file is  
2 compressed format, and the conversion format for the received file is decompressed  
3 format.

- 1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the source format of the received file is ZIP  
2 format.
- 1 11. The method of claim 7, wherein the source format of the received file is encrypted  
2 format, and the conversion format for the received file is decrypted format.
- 1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 transmitting to the selected server the received file written in the source format  
3 unreadable by the client computer; and  
4 receiving from the selected server a location of the received file written in a  
5 conversion format readable by the client computer, wherein the received file written in  
6 the source format is converted by the selected server into the received file written in the  
7 conversion format.
- 1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:  
2 directing a web browser application on the client computer to the location of the  
3 received file written in the conversion format on the selected server; and  
4 downloading the received file written in the conversion format from the selected  
5 server onto the client computer using the web browser application.
- 1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the location of the received file written in the  
2 conversion format is one of: a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and an Internet Protocol  
3 (IP) address.
- 1 15. The method of claim 12, wherein the conversion format for the received file is  
2 Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) format.
- 1 16. The method of claim 12, wherein the source format of the received file is  
2 compressed format, and the conversion format for the received file is decompressed  
3 format.

1 17. The method of claim 12, wherein the source format of the received file is  
2 encrypted format, and the conversion format for the received file is decrypted format.

1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 transmitting to the selected server the received file written in the source format  
3 unreadable by the client computer;  
4 receiving from the selected server display content information, wherein the  
5 received file is opened in an application running on the selected server and the display  
6 content information is generated therefrom; and  
7 displaying the display content information on the client computer.

1 19. The method of claim 1, wherein the received file is a file archive including a  
2 plurality of files written in a compressed format unreadable by the client computer,  
3 further comprising:  
4 transmitting to the selected server the file archive written in the compressed  
5 format;  
6 receiving from the selected server an index page including a plurality of links,  
7 each link corresponding to one of the plurality of files in the file archive written in a  
8 decompressed format readable by the client computer, wherein the file archive written in  
9 the compressed format is converted by the selected server into the file archive written in  
10 the decompressed format; and  
11 displaying the index page on the client computer.

1 20. A storage medium readable by a client computer and having instructions encoded  
2 thereon for causing the client computer to perform, in a computer network comprising the  
3 client computer and a plurality of servers, wherein each server is capable of being  
4 assigned at least one conversion rating, each conversion rating corresponding to a first  
5 file format unreadable by the client computer that the respective server is capable of  
6 converting into a second file format readable by the client computer, a method for  
7 selecting one of the plurality of servers, the method comprising the steps of:

8 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the file is written in a source  
9 format unreadable by the client computer; and  
10 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest conversion rating  
11 assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the received file.

1 21. The storage medium of claim 20, wherein the step of selecting one of the plurality  
2 of servers further comprises:

3 broadcasting the source format of the received file to the plurality of servers;  
4 in response to the broadcast, receiving from at least one of the plurality of servers  
5 the conversion rating assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the received  
6 file; and

7 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest received conversion  
8 rating.

1 22. The storage medium of claim 20, wherein the client computer comprises a lookup  
2 table having one or more entries, each entry including a file format unreadable by the  
3 client computer and a preferred one of the plurality of servers capable of converting the  
4 unreadable file format into a file format readable by the client computer, and wherein the  
5 step of selecting one of the plurality of servers further comprises:

6 locating the entry in the lookup table corresponding to the source format of the  
7 received file; and

8 selecting the server included in the located entry of the lookup table.

1 23. In a computer network comprising a client computer and a plurality of servers,  
2 wherein each server is capable of being assigned at least one conversion rating, each  
3 conversion rating corresponding to a first file format unreadable by the client computer  
4 that the respective server is capable of converting into a second file format readable by  
5 the client computer, the client computer comprising:

6 a processor;

7 a memory;

8 equipment for coupling to the network, wherein the client computer is capable of  
9 intermittently connecting to at least one of the plurality of servers through the network;  
10 and  
11 a computer program stored on the memory and capable of being executed by the  
12 processor, wherein the program is capable of performing the steps of:  
13 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the file is written in a  
14 source format unreadable by the client computer; and  
15 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest conversion  
16 rating assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the received file.

1 24. The client computer of claim 23, wherein the step of selecting one of the plurality  
2 of servers further comprises:  
3 broadcasting the source format of the received file to the plurality of servers;  
4 in response to the broadcast, receiving from at least one of the plurality of servers  
5 the conversion rating assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the received  
6 file; and  
7 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest received conversion  
8 rating.

1 25. The client computer of claim 23, further comprising: a lookup table stored on the  
2 memory and having one or more entries, each entry including a file format unreadable by  
3 the client computer and a preferred one of the plurality of servers capable of converting  
4 the unreadable file format into a file format readable by the client computer, wherein the  
5 step of selecting one of the plurality of servers further comprises:  
6 locating the entry in the lookup table corresponding to the source format of the  
7 received file; and  
8 selecting the server included in the located entry of the lookup table.

1 26. In a computer network comprising a client computer and a plurality of servers,  
2 wherein each server is capable of being assigned at least one conversion rating, each  
3 conversion rating corresponding to a first file format unreadable by the client computer

4 that the respective server is capable of converting into a second file format readable by  
5 the client computer, a method for selecting one of the plurality of servers comprising:  
6 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the file is written in a format  
7 unreadable by the client computer;  
8 transmitting the format of the received file to a resource locator server; and  
9 receiving a selection of one of the plurality of servers from the resource locator  
10 server, wherein the selected server has the highest conversion rating assigned thereto  
11 corresponding to the format of the received file.

1 27. The method of claim 26, further comprising reading a Multipurpose Internet Mail  
2 Extension (MIME) attached to the received file to identify the format of the received file.

1 28. The method of claim 26, further comprising receiving contact information for the  
2 selected server from the resource locator server.

1 29. The method of claim 28, wherein the contact information for the selected server  
2 comprises one of: a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and an Internet Protocol (IP)  
3 address.

1 30. In a computer network comprising a client computer and a plurality of servers,  
2 wherein each server is capable of being assigned at least one conversion rating, each  
3 conversion rating corresponding to a first file format unreadable by the client computer  
4 that the respective server is capable of converting into a second file format readable by  
5 the client computer, a method for displaying a file archive located on the Internet,  
6 wherein the file archive includes a plurality of files and is written in a source format  
7 unreadable by the client computer, comprising:  
8 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest conversion rating  
9 assigned thereto corresponding to the source format of the file archive;  
10 transmitting a location of the file archive on the Internet to the selected server;  
11 receiving from the selected server an index page including a plurality of links,  
12 each link corresponding to one of the plurality of files in the file archive written in a

13 conversion format readable by the client computer, wherein the file archive written in the  
14 source format is converted by the selected server into the file archive written in the  
15 conversion format; and  
16 displaying the index page on the client computer.

1 31. The method of claim 30, wherein the source format of the file archive is  
2 compressed format, and the conversion format of the file archive is decompressed format.

1 32. The method of claim 30, wherein the index page is written in Hyper Text Markup  
2 Language (HTML) and displayed on the client computer using a web browser application

1 33. The method of claim 30, wherein the location of the file archive on the Internet is  
2 one of: a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and an Internet Protocol (IP) address.

1 34. In a computer network comprising a client computer and a plurality of servers,  
2 wherein each server is capable of being assigned at least one conversion rating, each  
3 conversion rating corresponding to a first file format unreadable by the client computer  
4 that the respective server is capable of converting into a second file format readable by  
5 the client computer, a method for selecting one of the plurality of servers comprising:  
6 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the received file is written in a  
7 format unreadable by the client computer;  
8 broadcasting the format of the received file to the plurality of servers;  
9 in response to the broadcast, receiving from at least one of the plurality of servers  
10 the conversion rating assigned thereto corresponding to the broadcasted format of the  
11 received file; and  
12 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest received conversion  
13 rating.

1 35. The method of claim 34, further comprising:  
2 transmitting to the selected server the received file written in the format  
3 unreadable by the client computer;



4 receiving from the selected server the received file written in a conversion format  
5 readable by the client computer, wherein the received file written in the source format is  
6 converted by the selected server into the received file written in the conversion format;  
7 and  
8 displaying the received file written in the conversion format on the client  
9 computer using a native application on the client computer.

1 36. The method of claim 34, further comprising:  
2 transmitting to the selected server the received file written in the source format  
3 unreadable by the client computer; and  
4 receiving from the selected server a location of the received file written in a  
5 conversion format readable by the client computer, wherein the received file written in  
6 the source format is converted by the selected server into the received file written in the  
7 conversion format.

1 37. The method of claim 34, further comprising:  
2 transmitting to the selected server the received file written in the source format  
3 unreadable by the client computer;  
4 receiving from the selected server display content information, wherein the  
5 received file is opened in an application running on the selected server and the display  
6 content information is generated therefrom; and  
7 displaying the display content information on the client computer.

1 38. The method of claim 34, wherein the received file is a file archive including a  
2 plurality of files written in a compressed format unreadable by the client computer,  
3 further comprising:  
4 transmitting to the selected server the file archive written in the compressed  
5 format;  
6 receiving from the selected server an index page including a plurality of links,  
7 each link corresponding to one of the plurality of files in the file archive written in a  
8 decompressed format readable by the client computer, wherein the file archive written in

9 the compressed format is converted by the selected server into the file archive written in  
10 the decompressed format; and  
11 displaying the index page on the client computer.

1 39. A storage medium readable by a client computer and having instructions encoded  
2 thereon for causing the client computer to perform, in a computer network comprising the  
3 client computer and a plurality of servers, wherein each server is capable of being  
4 assigned at least one conversion rating, each conversion rating corresponding to a first  
5 file format unreadable by the client computer that the respective server is capable of  
6 converting into a second file format readable by the client computer, a method for  
7 selecting one of the plurality of servers, the method comprising the steps of:  
8 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the received file is written in a  
9 format unreadable by the client computer;  
10 broadcasting the format of the received file to the plurality of servers;  
11 in response to the broadcast, receiving from at least one of the plurality of servers  
12 the conversion rating assigned thereto corresponding to the broadcasted format of the  
13 received file; and  
14 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest received conversion  
15 rating.

1 40. In a computer network comprising a client computer and a plurality of servers,  
2 wherein each server is capable of being assigned at least one conversion rating, each  
3 conversion rating corresponding to a first file format unreadable by the client computer  
4 that the respective server is capable of converting into a second file format readable by  
5 the client computer, the client computer comprising:  
6 a processor;  
7 a memory;  
8 equipment for coupling to the network, wherein the client computer is capable of  
9 intermittently connecting to at least one of the plurality of servers through the network;  
10 and

11 a computer program stored on the memory and capable of being executed by the  
12 processor, wherein the program is capable of performing the steps of:  
13 receiving a file on the client computer, wherein the received file is written  
14 in a format unreadable by the client computer;  
15 broadcasting the format of the received file to the plurality of servers;  
16 in response to the broadcast, receiving from at least one of the plurality of  
17 servers the conversion rating assigned thereto corresponding to the broadcasted  
18 format of the received file; and  
19 selecting one of the plurality of servers having the highest received  
20 conversion rating.